



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
JUDICIAL BRANCH

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

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**Testimony of the Judicial Branch  
Judiciary Committee Public Hearing  
March 15, 2023**

**H.B. 6889, An Act Concerning Juvenile Matters**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Judicial Branch regarding **H.B. 6889, *An Act Concerning Juvenile Matters***. The Judicial Branch takes no stance on the policies furthered by the bill; however, we have implementation concerns with several sections of the proposal.

First, the new language in lines 10-14 would require juveniles committing violent offenses to be adjudicated in the geographical area in which the offense occurred. This may create confusion in the likely situation where a juvenile, in addition to the violent offense, has also committed other offenses that require the child to be adjudicated where the child resides.

Additionally, our Office of Victim Services (OVS) has significant implementation concerns regarding the expansion of the Victims Compensation Program in sections 8 and 9. Allowing victims of property crime to be compensated under the Victims Compensation Program would likely compromise the health of the fund and create a large increase in claims that OVS's current staffing levels would be unable to handle.

It should be noted that federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds can only be used for (1) personal injury and/or (2) emotional injury claims. Therefore, the state would be solely responsible for funding property damage claims. If the Committee chooses to move forward with the proposal, in addition to fully funding this expansion, we suggest that a maximum compensation amount be established as already exist for other types of

injuries, such as survivor benefits (\$25,000), personal injury claims (\$15,000) and emotional injury claims (\$5,000). We defer to the proponents about what limit would be appropriate.

Additionally, clarification is needed regarding how this new category of claims would be processed, which currently is outlined in general statutes sections 54-201 through 54-218. For example, will OVS need to consider the contributory conduct of the victim in the evaluation of a loss? Will OVS need to consider collateral sources available to the victim of property loss damage, as we are currently required to do for other claims? Finally, the language does not address what qualifying event would trigger OVS's review of the damage claim. Would a report to law enforcement and an arrest be the trigger event? If the juvenile offender is unknown to the victim, and has not been arrested, how would OVS determine that the offense was committed by a juvenile? Further clarification of these issues would be necessary before implementation.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.